

IT Initiative Supplement

April 27, 2010

I. Project Description

Project Title: Montana Access (EBT) Maintenance and Support

Brief Description of the Project Title: Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT), aka Montana Access, is used to electronically deliver Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash payments. It is also used for electronic reimbursement of retailers and financial institutions. Enhancements and maintenance of the EBT system is managed by the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, Technology Services Division (TSD) through a contract with an outside provider.

Statewide Priority: 1

Agency Priority: 1

Estimated Completion Date:

IT Project Biennium:

Request Number:

Version:

Agency Number:

Agency Name

Program Number:

Program Name:

A. Type of Project (check all that apply)

Enhancement

Replacement

New

✓O&M

B. Type of System (check all that apply)

✓Mid-Tier

Mainframe

GIS

Web

✓Network

Desktop

II. Narrative

C. Executive Summary

Project Purpose:

The EBT authorization platform was designed to contain all the functionality required by state and federal regulations to support SNAP (Food Stamp) Program transactions, as well as TANF benefits. The design was also extensible so that future state programs such as childcare, child support payments and Medicaid benefits could be added to the system.

Project Objectives:

The long term goals are:

- Reduce program stigma by eliminating the use of SNAP/Food Stamp coupons through the use of debit card technology.
- Provide better customer service for program participants.
- Reimburse merchants through the Automated Clearing House (ACH), thereby depositing funds in a more timely manner.
- Reduce issuance costs for the DPHHS by eliminating costly paper methods.
- Reduce coupon-processing costs for DPHHS and financial institutions, such as the Federal Reserve, by eliminating manual processes.
- Reduce and eliminate program fraud.
- Provide better management, administrative, reporting and tracking tools for the DPHHS.

Technical Implementation Approach:

The *Montana Access* system consists of an authorization engine, transaction switch (or gateway), point of sale devices, automated teller machine (ATM) network(s), card production, customer service support, administrative terminal support, retail management, reports, interfaces with various Federal agencies and bank accounts.

The State of Montana contracted with Northrop Grumman for the development of the authorization engine and to provide implementation services for the successful implementation of EBT in Montana.

SNAP or TANF benefits are passed from TEAMS (The Economic Assistance Management System) to the Montana Access authorization engine. The authorization engine establishes an account, and then a card is produced and mailed to the participant.

EBT transactions pass through a switch to reach the authorization engine. The authorization engine validates the transaction and either approves or denies the

transaction request. The result is returned to the requesting merchant or ATM. The transaction switch initiates the EBT settlement process through the Automated Clearing House, which is drawn on a State of Montana bank account.

The State performs the necessary draw down of Federal SNAP funds, transfers funds to the settlement account, and reconciles transactions.

Merchant participation is managed in the Montana Access system. Retailer management duties will pass from the State to the primary contractor July 1, 2010. The State has also maintained a relationship with the banking and ATM community to facilitate the cardholder issue resolution process.

Software:

The Montana Access system is maintained using the same tools used in the development phase. These include:

- Oracle 8i DBMS
- Oracle Designer 6i
- Oracle Developer 6i
- Oracle 8i PL/SQL
- IBM VisualAge C++ Professional.

- Oracle 8i is the database management software that controls the storage and retrieval of data in the Montana Access system. An upgrade to Oracle 10G for database management is currently in progress (04/2010) and waiting on IVR upgrades from Microlog to Nortel products to complete.
- Oracle Designer 6i maintains the repository of elements that make up the Montana Access system.
- Oracle Developer 6i is a suite of tools such as Procedure Builder, Forms Builder, and Reports Builder used to create and modify the system's forms, reports, functions, and procedures.
- Oracle 8i PL/SQL is the programming language used to create and update all Montana Access modules, including forms, reports, functions, procedures and batch routines.
- IBM VisualAge C++ Professional is the tool used to maintain the backend authorization routines.

Databases:

There are three production EBT databases and three test databases, residing on three respective servers. EBT1PRD and EBT2PRD are located in the DPHHS computer room in the Sanders building. EBT3PRD is located on a server in Northrop Grumman's data center in Albuquerque. All processing, with the exception of some batch reports, is done on the EBT1PRD server. This includes transactions, batch processing and account queries via telephone or Internet.

All data updates done on EBT1PRD are applied to EBT2PRD and EBT3PRD using Oracle's replication process, which is designed to keep all three databases synchronized. Although replicated data is scheduled to push to the other databases every minute, it often takes several minutes for data to be transferred. During periods of high database activity, EBT3PRD may be as much as five to seven minutes behind.

Redundancy and Backup:

Each of the three servers, EBT1, EBT2, and EBT3, are designed with hardware redundancy. For example, the operating system resides on mirrored RAID0 drives, so if one drive fails, the mirrored copy on another drive should allow the system to remain operational. The same is true of the disk drives where the database resides. RAID5 technology is used, which allows one drive in an array to fail yet the database will remain available. Each server has redundant power supplies and is supported by its separate UPS.

In addition to the redundancy built into each server, the EBT2 and EBT3 servers serve as backups for the EBT1 server. In the event of a failure on EBT1, we can manually start the transaction server on EBT2 or EBT3, and we can have eFunds switch to using an alternate server. The IVR fails over to the EBT2PRD database if the EBT1PRD database is unavailable. If EBT1PRD and EBT2PRD are both unavailable, the IVR fails over to EBT3PRD.

Customer Support:

Three types of customer service support are provided:

- EBT Cardholder Service Support , 24/7
- Merchant Customer Service Support.
- DPHHS Staff Application Software Service Support.

Project Schedule and Milestones:

June 2010:

Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system converted from Microlog to Nortel. This is a prerequisite to proceeding with the database upgrade to Oracle 10g

October 2010 (estimate):

Complete database conversion from Oracle 8i to 10g

D. Business and IT Problems Addressed

Effective February of 2010 the ReliaCard system replaced Montana Access for the delivery of Child Support Enforcement payments. Currently, Montana Access continues to deliver TANF and SNAP benefits, meeting the business requirements of DPHHS Human and Community Serviced Division, Public Assistance Bureau (HCSD/PAB).

Montana Access O&M projects are currently tracked via System Change Requests (SCR) and classified as either enhancements or maintenance projects.

Maintenance Projects

Reported maintenance issues are documented, validated, and initially evaluated by contractor management for potential showstopper status.

Showstopper SCRs are defined as an immediate system failure that could happen at any point in the system. Given the highest maintenance priority, showstoppers are assigned by the contractor to a developer for immediate resolution and restoration of service. The high level redundancy built in to Montana Access has proven effective in minimizing this type of problem.

Maintenance SCRs have a wider scope of definition and require priority assignment based upon the level of severity and how the problem affects the delivery of service. These issues typically including a range of issues from problems that interrupt the delivery of benefits, impede data input or system functionality, interrupt the flow of interface data, and interfere with system data display or reporting to simpler nuisance issues needing to be addressed.

Maintenance SCRs are reviewed by TSD/PMB in coordination with the Contractor. PMB prioritizes requests based upon the level of severity and need for resolution. Contractor staff uses these priorities to assign work to a developer accordingly. Customers contact PMB as needed for status and requests to elevate priorities as dictated by circumstances and need.

Enhancement Projects

Potential enhancements are evaluated based upon federal mandate and related implementation requirements. Possible alternative are considered to minimize costs if possible, while conforming to federal requirements.

Stakeholders submit enhancement requests to TSD/PMB, where requirements are gathered based upon meetings with the customer. Once validated, requirements are documented in project initiation documents that must be review and approved by the appropriate stakeholder, TSD/PMB and the contractor.

Alternative solutions are considered at this phase of initiation as well. These can include consideration of existing processes or systems, time/cost implications and any avenue that might be available to meet the need in an optimal fashion. Highest priorities are assigned to requests with federally mandated implementation dates.

Milestones

The contractor generates a comprehensive monthly project status report which provides information on both maintenance and enhancement projects. The report provides information for both planned and unplanned work broken down by showstoppers, problem reports Ad Hoc requests, Help Desk and Operations activities. Monthly card production statistics, enhancement milestones achieved, benefit issuance amounts and monthly percentages for service levels delivered are also reported.

For both enhancement and maintenance projects, progress and milestones are also monitored and controlled utilizing project control documents that include System Change Requests (SCR), Requirements Change Requests (RCR), Project Change Requests (PCR) and Deliverable Acceptance Requests (DAR).

III. Costs

G. Estimated Cost of Project:

Estimated Cost of Project	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	Total
1. Personal Services - IT Staff							0
2. Personal Services - Non IT Staff							0
3. Contracted Services	1,214,041	973,369	1,264,812	1,264,812	1,264,812	1,264,812	7,246,658
4. ITSD Services	29,771	12,783	29,771	29,771	29,771	29,771	161,638
5. Hardware							0
6. Software							0
7. Telecommunications	432,486	347,518	432,486	432,486	432,486	432,486	2,509,948
8. Maintenance	23,400	11,747	23,400	23,400	23,400	23,400	128,747
9. Project Management							0
10. IV & V							0
11. Contingency							0
12. Training							0
13. Other	39,778	82,565	39,778	39,778	39,778	39,778	281,455
Total Estimated Costs	1,739,476	1,427,982	1,790,247	1,790,247	1,790,247	1,790,247	10,328,446

Total Funding:

IV. Funding

H. Funding

Total Funding

Fund	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	Total
1. 01100	656,668	450,223	564,440	564,440	564,440	564,440	3,364,652
2. 02381	75,299	80,583	101,026	101,026	101,026	101,026	559,986
3. 03598	1,004,210	897,176	1,124,781	1,124,781	1,124,781	1,124,781	6,400,509
4.							0
5.							0
6.							0
Total Estimated Costs	1,736,177	1,427,982	1,790,247	1,790,247	1,790,247	1,790,247	10,325,147

Cash/Bonded:

Bill Number:

V. Cost upon Completion

1. Operating Costs upon Completion

This is an ongoing effort and does not have a completion date.

FTE:

Personal Services Costs:

Operating Costs:

Maintenance Expenses:

Total Estimated Costs:

2. Funding Recap

This is an ongoing effort and does not have a completion date.

Fund Type:

Amount:

Total Funding:

V. Risk Assessment

A. Current IT Infrastructure Risks

1. Current application 10+ years old? No
Date of last major upgrade? Montana Access is currently upgrading its database OS to Oracle 10G, expected to implement by June 2010.
2. Current application is based on old technology? No
If yes, what is the current hardware platform, operating system, and programming languages used to support the application?
3. Is the agency not capable of maintaining the current application with internal technical staff? Yes
If yes, who supports the application today? Northrop Grumman
4. Other IT infrastructure risks? None
If yes, provide further detail.

B. Current Business Risks

1. What are the risks to the state if the project is not adopted? N/A
2. Does the current application meet current business requirements? Yes
If “no”, what specific business functions does the application lack?

C. Project Risk Assessment

1. Describe any major obstacles to successful implementation and discuss how those obstacles will be mitigated. N/A

Table H Risk Assessment

Description	Severity (H/M/L)	Probability of Occurrence (%)	Estimated Cost	Mitigation Strategy